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PROMPTLY AND NEATLY EXECUTED.

THE POOR STUDENT'S DREAM,

OR, THE GOLDEN RULE.

BY C. H. WILEY, A. M.

CHAPTER I.

'And you think, Tom, I'll never be rich or

happy,' said Andrew Lindsay.

'You cannot be happy and poor,' answered

Thomas Weatherly, 'and that you'll always be

poor is as certain as that you are a visionary.'

'Then, the conclusion that I cannot be happy,

depends upon three propensities, not one of

which I admit,' replied Lindsay. 'I believe, in

the first place, that a man can be poor and hap-

py; but tell me why you think I am a visionary,

since my being such is to be the cause of my

poverty.'

'Because,' spoke Weatherly, 'because you

differ so entirely from the rest of the world in

your opinions. You are too confiding, too gen-

erous and too peaceful, so to speak. All history,

biography, and tradition, as well as our own ex-

perience, teach us that men in this world, are

in a state militant. When you leave these class-

ic shades, every man that you meet up the street

or on the highway, by the fire-side, or by the al-

tar, will be your enemy, and will, whenever oc-

casions offer, make you feel the truth of what

I say. You must arouse yourself, sir, and be

ever ready not only to strike in your own defence,

but also to be the aggressor when an unprovoked

agony comes in your way. We are all on a pi-

rate-sea; and all the world is divided into two classes,

the devourers and the devoured.'

'Weatherly,' said Lindsay solemnly, 'that is

most detestable doctrine which you teach; I am

almost afraid of you.'

'Come, come,' replied Weatherly smiling, 'you

construe me too literally. I spoke in tropes, and

yet, alas! did I not speak truth? The other day

I was reading Waddy Thompson's book on Mex-

ico, and when I came to that part where he

speaks of the Sacrificial Stone, on which the an-

cient Aztecs slaughtered their human victims, I

began to moralize. Here, in Mexico, the origi-

nal inhabitants offered human victims at the

shrine of their Deity: the Spaniards sacrificed

the Aztecs, and the Americans will sacrifice the

Spaniards. Is not the abomination of human

sacrifices still continued in that unhappy coun-

try? This is but a single instance, and I cite

it to illustrate my position. As it is with nations,

so it is with individuals; in some way or other,

every man is warring with his fellows, and he

that is not armed with selfishness, deceit and

cunning, will stand no more chance of holding his

own, than would a government without navy or

army.'

'All this is the result of false philosophy, and

improper education,' answered Lindsay; 'there

are a few pirates, I acknowledge, in all commu-

nities, but the majority are honest, peaceful and

liberal. What the world wants, is confidence;

each man knows himself to be just and reason-

able, he fears his neighbor—his neighbor fears

him. Now, for one, I intend to reverse this rule;

I intend to hold a window to my breast, and de-

ceive no one. I shall take it for granted, that

all are like myself until the contrary appears by

their conduct.'

'And I shall act upon the opposite principle,'

said Weatherly, 'and we'll see who is the more

successful. And by the way, how did your

rule work with the Cleavelands? From what

I've heard, I should judge that you've made a

bad beginning, and sacrificed a fortune to a

whim.'

'I don't know what you've heard,' answered

Lindsay, 'but I do know that the facts in regard

to the matter alleged, have not transpired, at

least from me. They are simply these, (and I

tell them to you to show you how mistaken you

are in your suspicions.) You know how I stood

in my native village; you know that, poor as I

was, my father in G. would have been willing

to see me a member of his family. In the acad-

emy, I took the first distinction; in the debating

society, I ranked first, and at every party I was

not an unwelcome guest. Now, you must re-

member, that from my boyhood, I had been

taught to venerate the name of Cleaveland; the

old General was the richest man in the country;

he stood at the head of society, and was fore-

most in every good work. Of course, his child-

ren came in for a share of his popularity, and

Harriet Cleaveland was thought to be as near

perfection as it is possible for a child of mortali-

ty to be. While a mere girl, the fame of her

wit, grace, gentleness, and beauty, interested

me; I thought of her in every place, and finally,

I loved her in a certain way, before I knew her

except by sight. I have reason to believe she

thought of me in the same way; each of the oth-

er's good angel, and our future union was a mat-

ter fixed on in our minds, and in those of the

whole community. We often met as we grew

up; we were intimate, and yet when I left for

college, I had never breathed love to her in any

way.

'When I returned down on a visit some time

ago, she was nearly grown, and as she already

had several suitors, I thought it time to put in

my claim. I did not wish to address her; I de-

sired only to let her know I intended to address

her at some future day. This was a delicate

task, and learning that I should not be able to do

it satisfactorily *en tenus*, or by word of mouth, I

had recourse to my pen. Delicate, too, as the

matter was, and sensitive as I am, I felt it to be

my duty under the circumstances, to inform

Harriet's parents of my intentions, and I never

shrink from the discharge of any duty. Accord-

ingly I wrote her a note, couched in the lan-

guage neither too cold nor too tender, informing

her of my wishes and intentions, and to give her

a full opportunity of knowing me well, request-

ed permission to write to her. This note I re-

quested her to show to her father, and remark-

ed that if it did not return to me I should con-

sider my request as granted. It did not come

back, and I wrote to her weekly; I wrote, not

love letters, but letters full of love, full of my

heart. I wrote as I think and feel; I wrote of

books, of human life, of God and Heaven, of life,

death, and immortality. In a word, she read all

my thoughts; she saw my soul in a picture, and I

flattered myself, too, that her taste might be some-

what improved by the style and subjects of my

letters. Finally, in a fit of extreme tenderness,

and when my lonely situation was pressing heav-

ily upon me, and she was about to go to the

North to finish her education, I wrote a long let-

ter, requesting an engagement, and enclosed the

letter to her father. It came back to me exact-

ly as I sent it, excepting only the envelope di-

rected to General Cleaveland. I was indignant,

and hastily went home, wrote to her and gave

the note to a servant of her father's. The ser-

vant came back, telling me that she would not

receive it; I called and she was not to be seen.

I then requested an interview of her father; he

declined it, and I wrote him a long letter, giving

him all the facts and justifying myself, and then

came back to college. Now, wherein have I

done wrong?

'That question displays your simplicity,' said

Weatherly, lighting a fresh cigar. 'In the first

place," continued he, "you ought never to have

given the girl formal information of your inten-

tions, and secondly, you ought not to have hint-

ed the matter to the old man until you had got

the girl's consent. "In such treaties," says Judge

R., from the Bench, "a certain degree of decep-

tion is allowable as necessary and is practised by

both the contracting parties." You must not

woo a timid and giddy girl as if you were treat-

ing for the purchase of a tract of land—you

must dress to her taste, flatter, insinuate and

tease. You must study her weak points, hum-

or her whims and in a word, secretly and sur-

ely wind yourself about her heart before she sus-

pects you, and then, when she is unguarded and

unprepared, assault her suddenly and violently

with a warm and eloquent speech, and press

your points until you force her consent. Then

bind her to you by the most solemn pledges,

commit her out and out before you break the

matter to her father. Thus you can then pic-

ture to him your mutual pledges; tell him of

your own fervent passion, and alarm him with

the prospect of having a heart-broken daugh-

ter.'

'I would not have any woman who had to be

thus wooed and won,' said Lindsay pettishly.

'Then you will have none,' replied Weather-

ly.

'Be it so,' answered Lindsay; 'be it so. If

Harriet Cleaveland is what I thought her, she

has no whims to gratify, and she would like me

all the better for my candor and my straight-

forward manly course; if she is not what I thought

her, I do not want her.'

'And this straight-forward, manly course,

as you call it, will get you into trouble with

all the world,' said Weatherly; 'it will not be ap-

preciated. You will only be giving others the

advantage over you, and they will use it.'

'I don't believe it,' answered Lindsay; 'and

by the way, let me tell you of a dream I had last

night, and which impressed me much.'

'I dreamed that I was walking over the fields

where I sported in the joyous days of my boy-

hood, and that many tender and melancholy

recollections came crowding into my mind.—

My early hopes and their too early blight were

remembered, and my thoughts were taking a

gloomy turn, when a very old man sudden-

ly overtook me. His locks were long and white,

and his limbs withered, and yet his face looked

hale and hearty while his clear gray eyes twink-

led with a kindly lustre. He moved nimbly and

noiselessly, without a stick or crutch, and car-

ried on his back a large wallet which he handled

as if it contained something extremely valua-

ble.

'After our salutation and a few words of con-

versation, he looked me closely in the face as

he said, "Do you wish to buy any books, young

man? I am old and wayworn, but I have all my

life been a pedlar and still follow the pursuit,

though sooth to say, I have never found my

trade a profitable one. Did I carry trinkets in-

stead of books, I would doubtless have met with

more purchasers; but still I manage to make a

living and to instruct mankind, which is my

chief aim." At this we sat down, and as he open-

ed his wallet and began to tumble its contents

on the ground, he observed the sparkle in my

eyes and continued: "Here is a handsome lot, is

it not? See how tempting are the titles! Here

is "The Road to Wealth," here "The Ladder of

Game," and here "The Multiplication Table of

Pleasure." Here is a treatise on "Hope," and

here is one on "Immortality"; here, Sir, is a book

on the "Wonders of the World," and here is one

concerning the "Science of Witchcraft." Rare,

curious and wonderful they all are; which will

you take?"

'I must look into them first,' I said; "I see they

are all fastened with curious locks; will you

please to open them?"

'You must buy a venture,' replied the old

man; "I'll teach you how to open it after you

have made my purchase. You seem to take an

interest in a work which has been a drag on my

hands; I sell very few copies of that, and they

only to very old or very sick people, who buy

when it is too late." This was said in reference

to a very small volume which I held in my hand,

and which was entitled, "How to Die," and which

I finally determined to purchase. "What," ex-

claimed the pedlar, "and you so young?" "Yes,"

I answered, "this is a subject which has always

interested me most: what's the price?" "Young

man," said the old dealer in books, "when I find

a true philosopher I charge him nothing for that

book. It is, indeed, the most valuable of all;

the great business of life is learn how to die, and

wisdom is that they learn this lesson in time. I

am Time; in all my other books the purchaser

finds only the word Death, the sole legacy that

[illegible]

HUBBARD & STEVENS.
March 16, 1947. reply 46

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